

Advance Policy Questions for Vice Admiral Eric T. Olson, USN
Nominee for Commander, United States Special Operations Command

Defense Reforms

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and the Special Operations reforms have strengthened the warfighting readiness of our Armed Forces. They have enhanced civilian control and the chain of command by clearly delineating the combatant commanders' responsibilities and authorities and the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. These reforms have also vastly improved cooperation between the Services and the combatant commanders, among other things, in joint training and education and in the execution of military operations.

Do you see the need for modifications of any Goldwater-Nichols Act provisions?

No, not at this time.

If so, what areas do you believe might be appropriate to address in these modifications?

I see no need to modify the Goldwater-Nichols Act at this time.

Do you believe that the role of the combatant commanders under the Goldwater-Nichols legislation is appropriate and the policies and processes in existence allow that role to be fulfilled?

Yes.

From the perspective you have gained in your previous assignments, do you believe that the authority and responsibility of the combatant commanders, in general, and the Commander, United States Special Operations Command, in particular, are appropriate?

Yes. In general, the Commander, USSOCOM's authorities and responsibilities are appropriate. If confirmed, I will explore whether modification to personnel management authorities are required.

Relationships

Section 162(b) of title 10, United States Code, provides that the chain of command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary of Defense to the combatant commands. Other sections of law and traditional practice, however, establish important relationships outside the chain of command. Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, to the following offices:

The Under Secretaries of Defense

If confirmed, I would anticipate frequent interaction with the Under Secretaries, particularly in the development of military policy and the acquisition process. USSOCOM maintains an especially close relationship with the Office of Under Secretary for Policy, who has primary responsibility for oversight of Special Operations Forces (SOF) operations and resources. Importantly, the law requires that we coordinate our involvement with the Office of the Secretary of Defense through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict

While USSOCOM has the principal responsibility for the readiness and preparation of SOF in support of the Geographic Combatant Commanders, USSOCOM's ability to execute those missions would be greatly hindered without the sound policies and oversight, interagency coordination, and advocacy provided by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict. Most of the Under Secretary for Policy oversight responsibilities regarding USSOCOM are exercised through the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense

I anticipate continued close coordination and cooperation in the determination of USSOCOM's role in Homeland Defense and to determine the military support necessary to protect the United States and its citizens during times of national emergency.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Commander, USSOCOM, coordinates activities through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS). This ensures the Chairman stays informed in order to execute his other responsibilities and also provides our Command with the beneficial contributions of the Joint Staff. I see it as a Commander's duty to work with and through the Chairman in the execution of Presidential and Secretary of Defense directed taskings.

The Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (VCJCS) is a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and when the Chairman is absent, or disabled, the Vice-Chairman acts in his stead. The Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) responsibilities are delegated to the

Vice-Chairman. The VCJCS also regularly represents the Chairman on the Interagency Deputy's Committee, the Defense Acquisition Board, and other boards and councils as necessary. Thus, the VCJCS plays an essential role for the CJCS in fulfilling his principal military advisor obligations. Because of these important roles, communication between a Combatant Commander and the VCJCS is as essential as it is with the CJCS.

The Secretaries of the Military Departments

The Combatant Commander's authority over Service components, including those forces assigned to him, is clear but requires close coordination with the Secretaries to ensure no infringement on those lawful responsibilities the Service Secretary alone may discharge.

The Service Chiefs

Without the full support and cooperation of the Service Chiefs, no Combatant Commander can hope to ensure the preparedness of his assigned forces for Presidential directed missions. Individually and collectively, the Joint Chiefs are a source of experience and judgment that every Combatant Commander can call upon. If confirmed as Commander, USSOCOM, I intend to continue a full and frank dialogue with the Chiefs of all the Services

The other Combatant Commanders

The Combatant Commanders define requirements for their respective areas of operational responsibility, an effort that assists USSOCOM in defining its support requirements. If confirmed, I intend to foster an atmosphere of teamwork and trust in my relationship with the Combatant Commanders. I will work closely with the other Combatant Commanders in order to best synchronize Department of Defense activities in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

The Director of the National Counterterrorism Center

Our primary responsibility is to write the Department of Defense's (DOD) GWOT plan in support of the National Implementation Plan, which was developed by National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). In this role, USSOCOM is actively engaged to support them. We have continuously assisted NCTC planning efforts and workgroups since its inception. USSOCOM has actively supported their development through exercise funding and participation and the provision of embedded planners to coordinate USSOCOM support, facilitate synchronization, and assist NCTC's Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning with planning, implementation, and assessment efforts as required.

The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency

We are a consumer of CIA analysis. The Director of the CIA has been to USSOCOM on numerous occasions over the last year. The CIA has liaison personnel at USSOCOM and in the field, as well as USSOCOM having a liaison at the CIA.

Qualifications

If confirmed, you will be entering this important position at a critical time for the United States Special Operations Command.

What background and experience do you have that you believe qualifies you for this position?

My 33 years in special operations have afforded me opportunities to serve and lead at every level. As a fully qualified SEAL operator with an advanced degree in National Security Affairs, I have both the training and education to lead this extraordinary force. I am a Middle Eastern specialist, a basic Arabic linguist, and an experienced joint planner. I have been decorated for personal valor as a SOF operator in two conflicts. My service in top leadership positions at both Service and joint headquarters has prepared me to operate at the senior levels of government. I have been involved in nearly every major decision regarding special operations for the last four years, and have represented USSOCOM to the Joint Staff and Office of the Secretary of Defense in several committees and working groups, including the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).

Major Challenges/Lessons Learned

In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command?

The major challenges are:

- Prioritizing the employment of SOF in order to gain maximum value from this limited asset.
- Sustaining the materiel readiness of our high-end mobility platforms in a resource constrained environment.
- Transforming our fixed-wing aviation fleet.
- Shifting to a more expeditionary deployment posture.
- Establishing the mechanisms and agreements with other agencies of government that will facilitate the best utilization of SOF globally.
- Maintaining appropriately streamlined acquisition processes and systems.
- Growing the force at the programmed rate while ensuring the quality and maturity that the Nation expects of SOF.

What are the most important lessons you have learned during your tenure in senior leadership positions in the Special Operations community?

Our people remain our most valuable asset.

SOF must be applied appropriately in order to conserve capability and capacity.

SOF must remain flexible and responsive, with a strong set of unique skills and abilities that can be rapidly applied.

If confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges?

If confirmed, I intend to take a long-term approach to special operations. We have been extremely successful in responding to immediate requirements for several years at the expense of a fully executable long-term plan. I intend to form teams to develop or improve long range vision for global posture, interagency relationships, joint training, SOF roles and missions, recruiting and retention, and technology development.

Most Serious Problems

What do you consider to be the most serious problems in the performance of the functions of Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command?

USSOCOM lacks authority to manage the assignments, promotions, and pay of SOF. This inhibits his ability to meet his responsibility to ensure the combat readiness of the force.

The Commander, USSOCOM, is designated the lead Combatant Commander for planning and synchronizing DOD activities against terrorists and terrorist networks. That said, USSOCOM's ability to drive behavior within DOD is limited due to unclear definition of authorities. That makes enforcement of those authorities difficult.

What management actions and time lines would you establish to address these problems?

If confirmed, I would work with the senior DOD leadership to clarify USSOCOM's authorities with respect to influencing or conducting operations inside and across other Global Combatant Commanders' areas of responsibility. This can be accomplished within DOD policy and planning documents during their next review cycles.

Personnel management authorities must be carefully considered with a goal of initiating solutions in Fiscal Year 2010.

Operation Iraqi Freedom

From your perspective as Deputy Commander, United States Special Operations Command, what are the main “lessons learned” from Operation Iraqi Freedom, including the ongoing stability operations?

There remains a need to enhance the Joint Force Commander’s ability to integrate capabilities and capacities of both SOF and the general purpose forces (GPF) during execution of the GWOT in order to create a joint force that is equally competent in irregular warfare as well as conventional warfare.

Three focus areas to achieving this goal are as follows:

- There is an overlap of SOF and GPF capabilities. SOF forces are routinely performing tasks that could be performed by existing GPF capabilities or GPF with additional training. Rebalancing GPF structure to mitigate shortfalls in low density/high demand SOF assets is essential to the GWOT/Irregular Warfare (IW) effort.
- Our forces will continue to face an irregular enemy. There exists a necessity to move the IW concept to a full scale capability.
- Both SOF and GPF forces require enhanced language and cultural training

Addressing these focus areas would lead to a joint force with enhanced capabilities for IW and a balanced approach to warfighting that allows it to be as compelling in IW as it is in conventional warfare.

What are the operational, research and development, and procurement implications of those lessons?

SOF must be organized, trained, equipped, and employed in a manner that enables full spectrum operations.

How would you assess the adequacy of special operations forces provided to Central Command, both in terms of quantity and mix, to conduct Operation Iraqi Freedom?

SOF in the Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations have proven to be extraordinarily capable and responsive to the needs of operational commanders. They provide operational flexibility to adequately meet mission requirements.

What is the short- and long-term impact of continued operations in Iraq for special operations forces, including in terms of readiness, retention, and modernization?

Short-term gains in combat experience at the cost of reduced capability in specific skill areas not utilized in OIF/OEF.

Long-term impact is uncertain. I anticipate manpower and equipment recapitalization challenges.

Afghanistan

About five years after securing a military victory against the Taliban and al ‘Qaida in Afghanistan, U.S. and international forces are still fighting Taliban forces and other opponents of the Afghan government.

What is your assessment of the current situation in Afghanistan?

As you know, CENTOM has the lead for DOD’s efforts in Afghanistan, and we support CENTCOM in their strategy. I share the same view as Secretary Gates on Afghanistan. We are optimistic that efforts to rid Afghanistan of terrorists and build its new government are working. Things are headed in the right direction and we continue our work to eliminate enemy safe havens.

In your view, what is the appropriate role of special operations forces in Afghanistan, and the proper relationship between direct action and counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations?

SOF are appropriately employed in both the direct action and irregular warfare role in order to suppress Taliban and al Qaida activity while contributing to the long-term stability and security of Afghanistan.

That dual role of direct and indirect operations should continue to help resolve the conflict within Afghanistan. Where necessary, SOF must conduct direct action operations to help eliminate the armed threat. However, the indirect approach is vital to ensure success so the people of Afghanistan have the ability to maintain their own security and prosper.

Policy Office Reorganization

In your view, what is the impact on the Special Operations Command of the ongoing reorganization of the office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy?

USSOCOM has not felt any significant impact to date from the reorganization.

At what level do you believe most oversight of the command will occur – at the level of the Assistant Secretary or Deputy Assistant Secretary?

Most oversight will occur at the level of the Assistant Secretary.

Transformation of Special Operations Forces

Much attention has been focused on the transformation of our conventional armed forces to make them more capable of conducting counterinsurgency and combating terrorism missions.

Do our Special Operations Forces (SOF) need to be transformed?

SOF can never remain stagnant and are in continuous transformation.

If so, what is your vision for such a transformation, and how would the transformation of conventional forces complement a SOF transformation, and vice versa?

The foundation pillars of SOF transformation revolve around three Strategic Objectives: GWOT Lead, Global Presence, and Global Expeditionary Force. USSOCOM, while retaining an unequalled ability to conduct rapid and precise direct action operations, will also conduct operations in protracted regional and global campaigns designed to subvert, attrit, and exhaust an adversary rather than defeat him through direct conventional military confrontation.

Are the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and the Department of Defense – particularly the military services – investing in the technologies to transform SOF according to the vision you describe?

Yes, we are investing in those types of technologies. There are two integral parts to USSOCOM's technology program -- leveraging the Services, Defense Agencies, and government laboratory efforts, while harvesting those technology efforts that can be rapidly transitioned into capabilities for the operator. We will continue to pursue technological advances that address SOF-unique requirements but which can also be integrated with the conventional forces.

Research and Technology

If confirmed, what metrics will you use to determine the effectiveness of SOCOM technology development investments and whether SOCOM is investing enough resources in these efforts?

We have created a series of technology road maps that assist us in identifying promising solutions to our problems. These road maps are schedule oriented; containing both the technology development time lines and the formal acquisition program schedules. As such, they have quantifiable metrics (cost, schedule, performance and technology readiness) embedded in them.

Acquisition Workforce

If confirmed, how you will ensure that SOCOM has the highest quality acquisition workforce to develop and manage acquisition and research and development programs?

The quality of our acquisition workforce is directly related to the combination of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) standards, the Services' ability to continue to provide properly trained military acquisition personnel to fill our military billets, and our ability to hire qualified civilian personnel. The quality in our acquisition workforce comes from ensuring that USSOCOM acquisition personnel (whether military or civilian) are trained and certified to DAWIA standards. This ensures they have the acquisition education, experience and training needed to effectively manage USSOCOM acquisition, research and development programs. By virtue of a series of Memoranda of Agreement with the three Military Departments, USSOCOM also has access to and can obtain experienced advice, program management support, and technical assistance from the Military Departments for our USSOCOM acquisition programs.

Basing for Special Operations Forces

The Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy released by the President in August 2004 called for special operations forces from various overseas locations in Europe and the Pacific theater to be relocated to military installations in the United States in order to better manage the demand for forces and high operations tempo.

Do you support this realignment of special operations forces back to the United States?

Yes. The overall objective of the USSOCOM Global SOF Posture (GSP) is to establish a worldwide persistent joint SOF presence to shape operational environments in support of the GWOT and theater security cooperation initiatives. The realignment will permit a more tailorable force to accomplish this.

In your opinion, does the realignment in any way diminish the ability of special operations forces to support the requirements of Combatant Commanders? If so, how would you propose to address this problem?

No. Implementation of the GSP, when combined with SOF growth, provides USSOCOM the ability to manage SOF from a global perspective and provides better flexibility to meet the increasing demands of the Combatant Commanders.

In your opinion, are special operations forces based at locations in the United States appropriately positioned to facilitate joint training, operations, and rapid deployment?

Yes. Currently we have SOF spread throughout the United States with the majority on or near both coasts. Although there are no true joint bases, our units are generally based in close enough proximity to enable joint training. If confirmed, I would seek additional opportunities to enhance joint training.

In your view, with the growth of special operations forces end strength should any military installations in the United States be designated solely as Special Operations bases?

No. USSOCOM is not structured or resourced to manage military bases. The support provided by the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps in their roles as executive agents enables our forces to maintain their Service culture, enhances SOF recruiting, and provides SOF with access to Service-common facilities and transportation hubs resident on or near major military installations. This close proximity to our Services helps facilitate mobility and jointness without degrading our SOF-unique requirements and capabilities.

In your opinion, does SOCOM have access to sufficient ranges in the United States to be able to adequately train for the full range of joint, combined arms special operations missions?

Yes. We have access to a spectrum of ranges but face ongoing coordination, utilization, and access challenges. Some of the ranges we have historically used require intensive coordination and often changes to training schedules to ensure sufficient range time.

USSOCOM and its components, together with the Services, are diligently working the issues. The U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) is assisting us in certifying USMC ranges for nonstandard weapons. The U.S. Army Special Operations Command has been very successful working with Army to ensure Army SOF requirements are planned and built into Army ranges. The Air Force Special Operations Command worked with the Joint National Training Center to establish a Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) range for AC-130 gunship use.

We are assessing the feasibility of investing in SOF ranges or in establishing right-of-first-use agreements at installations with ranges that support our requirements to improve access and reduce schedule changes. Further, we are looking at options for moving some training closer to our home bases.

Combating Terrorism

If confirmed, you would play an integral role in the Department's combating terrorism mission.

Which Department of Defense official provides the primary civilian oversight with regard to SOCOM's combating terrorism mission?

Title 10 USC, Section 138, establishes the duties of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict. He is the principal civilian advisor to the Secretary of Defense on special operations and low intensity conflict, as well as the senior management official within the Department for special operations and low intensity conflict. These responsibilities include the overall supervision of special operations directed toward combating terrorism.

What other Department of Defense officials would be involved in oversight of SOCOM's combating terrorism mission?

The Under Secretaries of Defense for Intelligence and Policy both provide oversight, direction, and guidance to USSOCOM's efforts to execute its mission. I would anticipate continued, frequent interaction with these two principal Under Secretaries.

Information Operations

Information operations and information warfare will likely play an increasing role in 21st Century warfare.

What is your definition of information operations, and what role do you envision for SOCOM in overall U.S. information operations?

Information operations are the integrated employment of electronic warfare, computer network operations, psychological operations, military deception, and operations security to influence, disrupt, corrupt or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own information systems.

SOF play a significant role utilizing Information Operations to achieve DOD objectives in the GWOT. Through the Geographic Combatant Commanders, USSOCOM plans and integrates the full range of information operations capabilities to deter, deny and degrade extremist operations and networks, while building partner nation capabilities and eliminating the conditions that foment terrorism.

USSOCOM is the DOD proponent for psychological operations (PSYOP) forces, training and capabilities.

Under what circumstances would the Commander, SOCOM, conduct information operations as a supported combatant commander?

As the DOD lead for planning and synchronizing the war on terrorism, USSOCOM guides collaborative planning, coordination, and when directed, execution of information operations. As the supported command, USSOCOM envisions execution of information operations to support surgical, limited duration, counterterrorism missions, as well as support to long range planning to develop coordinated, trans-regional strategies against terrorists and their supporters.

Along with the DOD, USSOCOM is also working with the Department of State and other government agencies to develop integrated national Strategic Communication processes and responsibilities, in which information operations plays a significant role.

Supported Combatant Command

As Deputy Commander, SOCOM, you have been involved in the exercise of SOCOM's responsibilities as a supported combatant command, and as a supporting combatant command.

In your view, under what circumstances should SOCOM conduct operations as a supported combatant command?

When near simultaneous operations must be conducted within two or more Global Combatant Commands, USSOCOM would provide the oversight to ensure synchronization and de-confliction of these operations.

Also, a scenario that requires a very small and precise operation that is SOF-peculiar in nature could lead to designation of USSOCOM as the supported commander.

In your view, what resource, organization, and force structure changes, if any, are required in order for SOCOM to more effectively conduct both supporting and supported combatant command responsibilities?

To meet our responsibilities as a supported Combatant Command we must to continue to: properly man our components and headquarters; ensure they have the latest equipment and technology; and develop a better cross Global Combatant Command, Service, Coalition and Inter-agency compatible collaborative planning and execution environment. We must also expand upon our liaison officer and Special Operations Support Team programs with our Coalition Partners and Agencies.

Aircraft modernization, ISR platforms, and global sensor network are three key areas that require additional resources.

Recruiting and Retention

How successful has SOCOM been in recruiting and retaining the personnel it needs?

The personnel readiness of SOF is excellent. Our primary focus in Fiscal Year 2007 has been to maintain readiness while executing current operational requirements and personnel growth. Execution of retention incentives, coupled with the expansion of our training base and ongoing efforts to improve recruiting, are the way forward as we maintain and grow the force.

Recently implemented retention and bonus programs are having a positive impact across all SOF personnel from all Services. Retention numbers to date meet or exceed each Service's retention goals.

We are cautiously optimistic that recently implemented recruiting and retention incentive programs will continue to positively shape the force.

What are the biggest challenges to retention you see in the SOCOM community?

The greatest challenge will be the continued funding of retention incentives in a climate of constrained resources.

Specifically, what is the status of the efforts to increase retention within SOCOM's components, and especially among the Navy SEAL officers, all senior NCOs, and pilots?

SEAL officers will be eligible for the Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB) in 2007, which targets officers in pay grades O-4 through O-6, with the goal of retaining selected officers up to the 25-year career milestone. It complements the existing Officer Career Pay that was implemented in 1999 for officers with 6-14 years of service. Since inception of the Officer Career Pay, retention increased from a low of 34 percent to an average of 64 percent. Although the results are still undetermined, the CSRB is expected to influence retention behavior among Navy SEAL officers.

To retain the experience of senior noncommissioned officers, the combination of CSRB and Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) is producing positive results. For Army SOF in particular, the inception of the CSRB and AIP in Fiscal Year 2005 is retaining a more mature force. The average retirement time in service stood at 21.7 years for Special Forces (SF) personnel. We were losing experienced leaders at a critical career juncture. Fiscal Year 2007 data shows that SF personnel now retire at an average of 25 plus years time in service. This is a significant jump in the right direction since inception of the CSRB and targeted AIPs. This combination is also working well for the other SOF components.

The Air Force Fixed Wing pilot population is being monitored closely due to an increased number of young aviators being assigned. This lack of experience concerns us because of the special skills required to fly SOF mission profiles. This is why we are looking at ways to increase the experience levels of fixed wing pilots. We have identified the critical attributes believed to be keys to success of SOF aviators and they will be stressed in our recruitment

efforts. From an assessment perspective, we currently measure progress at every level of training and will continually look for ways to strengthen our evaluation rigor throughout the process. The Air Force Special Operations Command, partnered with the Air Force, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserves, will continue to explore various venues in order to increase aircrew experience levels.

What steps need to be taken, in your view, to meet the recruiting and retention goals of each of the services' special operations forces?

Recruiting will continue to be challenging. To mitigate these challenges, we need your help in increasing the recruiting budgets of the Services. The Services need greater flexibility to reward those qualified candidates who accept the challenges of Special Operations training. Recruiting commands need the flexibility of additional resources to apply to areas that are most under-resourced. By continuing to work with the Services, I believe we will continue to improve the SOF accession numbers.

What monetary or non-monetary incentives do you believe would be most effective in this regard?

Monetary incentives including the Selective Re-enlistment Bonus (SRB), Officer Continuation Pay (OCP), Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB), Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP), and Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) are proving to be critical force shaping tools. To date, these have been the most effective retention tools we have. Additionally, providing targeted enlistment bonuses for new SOF accession candidates will help shape the future force.

We are currently exploring other quality of life benefits that are difficult to quantify or measure in order to optimize their impact on retention and readiness. I believe that intangible incentives, such as camaraderie, job satisfaction, and family support are just as important, if not more, so than monetary ones. However, the monetary incentives are the only metrics we can quantifiably measure at this time.

We will study the potential impact of adjustment to retirement packages.

Marine Corps Special Operators

What do you believe should be the appropriate relationship between the Marine Corps and SOCOM?

USSOCOM should work with the Marine Corps as it does with the other Services. A close relationship is especially important now as the Marine Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) continues to gain initial capabilities.

Do you believe that Marines should be “SOF for life,” just as Army special operations forces are?

Yes, the career path of Marine SOF should be modeled after the other SOF components.

What can be done to improve the training of Marines in the Marine Corps special operations units to ensure that they possess the language capabilities and cultural awareness that are needed for counterterrorism and training missions?

The MARSOC is still not fully manned but is maturing at a faster than expected rate, benefiting from our other Service components’ lessons learned. It has implemented a qualification pipeline that includes language and cultural training. Additionally, their principal training unit has regionally oriented its teams to facilitate regionally focused training. Their program requires continued emphasis and we must provide for sufficient training capability afloat to account for sustainment and mission changes. They are on the right track.

Special Operations Missions

What current missions, if any, do you believe can and should be divested by SOCOM, and why?

SOF should not divest any mission areas. There are some tasks that should be handed off to general purpose forces at the right time.

Are there any additional missions that you believe SOCOM should assume, and, if so, what are they and why do you advocate adding them?

No, our current mission set is appropriate to meet requirements to conduct both direct and indirect operations.

What can be done to ensure that SOF missions with medium- and long-term impact, such as unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense, receive as much emphasis as direct action, and that they receive appropriate funding?

Continue to fully implement the QDR decisions related to SOF growth in both capability and capacity. This will enable enhanced training and more robust presence outside of CENTCOM's AOR.

Continue to support section 1208/1202 authorities as we work with the Theater Special Operations Commands to support their regional efforts.

Size of Special Operations Forces

The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) called for increases in the size of special operations forces.

Do you believe that we should increase the number of special operations personnel? If so, why, and by how much? If confirmed, would you consider greater increases than those envisioned in the QDR?

The QDR directed growth in both the size and capabilities of SOF, allowing USSOCOM to accomplish its increased missions and responsibilities of synchronizing the GWOT as both a supported and supporting command. Overall, the QDR increases SOF by 13,119 personnel, which will: grow U.S. Army Special Forces, Rangers, SOF aviation, active duty U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations; increase SEAL Team force levels; establish MARSOC as the Marine Corps component of USSOCOM; and create a SOF unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) squadron. This QDR directed growth will address most of the current manpower shortages faced by USSOCOM. However, we are constantly evaluating and analyzing current and emerging missions, and any additional force structure or manpower required to support these requirements. At this time, our most pressing capability gap is in the area of Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance. USSOCOM is working to address this shortfall, but in the future may require additional funding and equipment to close the gap.

In your view, how can the size of special operations forces be increased, while also maintaining the rigorous recruiting and training standards for special operators?

This must be a two-pronged strategy. The first must be retention efforts aimed at mid- and senior-level SOF warriors. This will mitigate gaps until the growing force matures. Secondly, it is imperative that the training standards for SOF not be diluted. While we look at ways to increase the proficiency within the training pipelines, we will maintain the standards necessary for our forces.

Civil Affairs Units

The increased role of the United States military in numerous missions throughout the world has stressed SOCOM, in particular the civil affairs units, most of which are in the Army Reserve.

If the current high operational tempo continues, would it be advisable to increase the number of civil affairs units?

This is something I would like to analyze over time.

If so, should the increase be in the active Army or the Army Reserve and why?

Given the recent transition of Reserve Component Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs units to the Army, that is where most increases should be concentrated should they be needed. SOF retained the active duty Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs units, which were increased as part of the QDR.

What impact has the high operational tempo had on recruiting and retention in reserve civil affairs units?

To date, Army Reserve Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations branches are relatively strong. Recruiting remains a focus for junior officers while senior officers and enlisted inventories are manned at greater than 100 percent strength.

Reserve Civil Affairs personnel are now under the administrative command of the Army.

What impact do believe this is having, and will have on the training, equipping and promotion and individual assignments of Civil Affairs reservists?

The transfer of U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) Civil Affairs personnel to the command of the Army occurred in October 2006 in an effort to ensure better integration of USAR Civil Affairs units with conventional forces. This action has been worked extensively by special working groups from USSOCOM, U.S. Joint Forces Command, and the U.S. Army to ensure that the full Civil Affairs capability is maintained and that the warfighting requirements of the Combatant Commanders are met. USSOCOM, through the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, continues to retain joint proponentcy for both active and reserve Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations forces, as well as the Training Center of Excellence. I have full confidence in the U.S. Army's ability to fully execute its Title X responsibilities in order to ensure the proper training, equipping, and promotion of Civil Affairs soldiers within the U.S. Army Reserve.

The overall impact of this transfer to date is minimal.

Readiness and OPTEMPO

To what extent has the pace of operations in recent years had an impact on U.S. SOCOM's readiness, retention, and resources?

Since September 11, 2001, the increased role of SOF in fighting the GWOT has been accompanied by increased requests for base year and supplemental funding. In Fiscal Year 2001, USSOCOM received a total of \$2.3 billion; the current Fiscal Year 2008, the President's budget request seeks \$6.2 billion; in addition, the Fiscal Year 2008 GWOT request seeks another \$2 billion in supplemental funding to support GWOT requirements.

With regard to retention, overall OPTEMPO has not had an adverse effect on morale, recruitment, and retention. Morale and retention are closely linked. Retention rates remain high for our enlisted SOF operators.

What actions can be taken to reduce any negative impacts?

Full and timely funding of the Fiscal Year 2008 President's budget request and the Fiscal Year 2008 GWOT will provide USSOCOM with the resources needed to meet the challenges of its increased missions and responsibilities of synchronizing the GWOT.

Do you expect the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) -related personnel increases to alleviate the strain?

The QDR directed growth in both the size and capabilities of SOF, allowing USSOCOM to accomplish its increased missions and responsibilities of synchronizing the GWOT as both a supported and supporting command. Overall, the QDR increases SOF by 13,119 personnel, and will: grow U.S. Army Special Forces, Rangers, and SOF aviation; grow Active Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations; increase SEAL Team force levels; establish MARSOC as the Marine Corps component of USSOCOM; and create a SOF unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) squadron. This growth will enable some OPTEMPO relief. More importantly, it will permit SOF presence in selected areas where we have been underrepresented for several years.

What is the current state of special operations readiness, for all missions, for all service components?

Operational readiness is at an all time high. Never in the history of our organization has the SOF community received the level of resource support, attention, and cooperation that we have realized and programmed from the President, the Congress, and the Service Chiefs. At the same time, it is important to mention that deployed operational tempo for the average Service member assigned to a SOF unit, and equipment utilization rates are also at their highest point in the history of our organization. Managing the second and third order effects of compressed rotational timelines, increased wear and tear on equipment, and impacts within the families of our dedicated service members is a challenge that requires constant intrusive management and planning.

It is important to note that some manning shortfalls exist in a number of select skill sets across all Service components. We are managing this issue through increased accessions into the various pipelines, targeted pay incentives, and increased recruiting efforts.

Is it your understanding that these readiness assessments include an assessment of current language skills for your geographically-specialized operators? Should they?

USSOCOM has paid inadequate attention to the true language readiness of our force as a measure of total operational readiness. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that readiness assessment includes language metrics.

What actions need to be taken, in your view, to address reduced language and cultural awareness proficiency that results from the fact that SOCOM has not been able to deploy many personnel to their regional areas of expertise?

In the current environment, training time is short and precious. We are still deploying SOF around the world but in smaller numbers outside of CENTCOM and the rotations of units not regionally oriented for CENTCOM has had an impact on language and regional capability.

Most SOF language requirements and abilities are in the Army component (Special Forces) and most of the initial language and culture training is conducted in our basic training pipelines.

We need to make it easier for personnel to train by providing greater access to proven, high quality training that can be delivered more flexibly than the traditional classroom but that has proven, measurable, results that are at least comparable to traditional training. Options that have worked well for us include tailored, low student to teacher ratio classes and delivering live training over the web.

Immersion and iso-immersion are training formats that produce significant results in short periods for students who have already attained basic proficiency (level 1). Since CENTCOM rotations make training time even more scarce, immersion and is-immersion training are effective, if costly, means of maximizing the capability gained in the short periods available.

Our current language proficiency (i.e. testing) measurement process has a direct, negative impact on our training programs and, ultimately, capability. Conversing is the key foreign language skill for special operators; however, current test policy, infrastructure, and capacity focus on the read/listen portion of Defense Language Proficiency Tests that are increasingly constructed to serve users whose military tasks center on listening at proficiency Level 2 and higher.

The result is that our instructors focus on read/listen skills to demonstrate their effectiveness and our students focus on read/listen skills to obtain foreign language incentive pay while our key requirement is for speaking. Special Operations Forces language tasks are most often performed in face-to-face conversations. The listening component of these newer read/listen tests is less relevant to our requirements.

Those willing to dedicate the time should be provided a funded incentive. Funding foreign language incentive pay for personnel whose language proficiency is Level 1 or 1+ is important to increasing our capability. Special Operations personnel generally attend courses that target Level 1 proficiency and will train with a regional focus so that subsequent training and assignments will enhance the individual's capability over a career in SOF. Incentive pay at 1 and 1+ helps bridge the gap from initial SOF capability to higher levels.

Increased provision of role players, in language, across a wider range of exercises will also help to identify deficiencies while cementing the importance of the cultural and language expertise. In the long-term we need to increase the level of our capability and, as previously alluded to, eventually reaching a "closed-loop" for all SOF operators. Regional orientation for specific units will capitalize on training and experience investments while yielding more expert capability.

If confirmed, what language programs, if any, would you put in place to maintain and improve language skills?

There are some common elements in most of our programs. We normally target language proficiency level 1 for initial courses. All of our courses include relevant cultural content. USSOCOM has a mature language training program in place within Army SOF and we need to continue this program and ensure it is fully funded.

The Marine SOF are rapidly establishing language and culture training as integral parts of their qualifying training. They have well thought-out plans in implementation now for sustainment and enhancement. Currently, this is focused primarily on their trainers but it is envisioned to eventually include the whole force. In the interim, tailored training is provided to the counterterrorism units. Exportable training support packages are also being provided to enable training enroute for units afloat as missions may change. The long-term effectiveness of the Marine SOF program hinges on retaining Marine SOF within USSOCOM and targeted regional orientation.

Regionalization is of less importance to SOF Air Force units, with the exception of one squadron that specializes in training foreign forces. This squadron recently implemented a training pipeline and their initial and subsequent training are tied to regional orientation but, without repetitive assignments in SOF will have limited success,

We are conducting several joint SOF language training programs now and are assessing the results. We expect ready access to training time and gyms to remain fit but we are often unable to meet that same standard for language training.

These programs must be supported and facilitated with appropriate funding, incentives, personnel assignment and management policies, and relevant testing.

Training and Equipping Indigenous Forces Fighting with SOF

In Section 1208 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005, Congress gave SOCOM a two-year authority to train and equip indigenous forces fighting alongside U.S. special operators. This year the Department is seeking a reauthorization.

How has SOCOM used this authority, and to what effect?

During the last three years (Fiscal Years 2005-2007), USSOCOM has coordinated with the Geographic Combatant Commanders to use section 1208 funding authority in every theater. In some cases, it has been used to better enable partner nation forces to support us in fixing and finishing terrorists (e.g., the Philippines). In others, it has been used to employ indigenous elements to gain access to hostile areas where U.S. forces cannot openly operate and obtain information about potential terrorist targets which could not be obtained through conventional intelligence collection methods (e.g., Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and Horn of Africa). In all cases, section 1208 authority has provided invaluable access and information that has saved American lives and contributed to the successful apprehension of high-value terrorist targets.

If confirmed, how and where would you use this authority?

First, let me make the point that section 1208 funding authority is used by the Geographic Combatant Commanders who are conducting military operations using SOF forces. USSOCOM does not conduct its own section 1208 operations. Nevertheless, I would continue to support the Global Combatant Commanders in using section 1208 in support of Counterterrorist operations to gain access to terrorist safe havens and seek information that only indigenous tribes and native inhabitants can provide. Our supported commanders have confirmed repeatedly that section 1208 funding authority is an absolutely essential tool in the war on terrorism.

Advanced SEAL Delivery System (ASDS)

To date, about \$885 million has been spent on developing the Advanced SEAL Delivery System (ASDS). The Fiscal Year 2008 request for ASDS is \$10.6 million for procurement and \$20.3 million for research and development.

In your view, can SOCOM afford to have more than one ASDS?

The original requirement for a small fleet of manned dry submersibles is unchanged, but it is clear that more than one of the current ASDS platform is unaffordable unless costs can be reduced. The Department cancelled the original ASDS program. As a result only one ASDS hull exists, and only the correction of reliability problems on that hull (designated ASDS-1) remain to be completed. The Fiscal Year 2008 funding is being used to correct these deficiencies through the installation of a series of design and reliability improvements. The Navy will be conducting an Alternate Material Solutions Analysis to determine how to best meet current and future SOF undersea warfare requirements. The analysis will examine a broad range of potential material solutions and will recommend a solution or combination of solutions to satisfy the capability gaps identified in a recent capability gap analysis performed by the Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command. The Alternate Material Solutions Analysis will also include the respective cost estimates for the various solutions. This will be completed by February 2008 and will inform any future program decisions.

How long will it take for you to ensure that we have an operational ASDS?

We expect ASDS-1 to become fully operational and ready for deployment to meet assigned missions in Fiscal Year 2008. The ASDS Reliability Improvement Program was initiated in Fiscal year 2006 to improve the operational reliability of the existing ASDS vehicle (ASDS-1), in order to make it fully operational and ready for deployment to meet assigned missions. The ASDS Reliability Improvement Program is on schedule. This ongoing reliability effort represents the major portions of the funding shown in the Fiscal Year 2007 and Fiscal Year 2008 budget exhibits. As a result of this effort, ASDS-1 has demonstrated significantly improved reliability within the past year during both independent and mated underway operations.

Treatment of Detainees

Do you agree with the policy set forth in the July 7, 2006, memorandum issued by Deputy Secretary of Defense England stating that all relevant DoD directives, regulations, policies, practices, and procedures must fully comply with Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions?

Yes.

Do you support the standards for detainee treatment specified in the revised Army Field Manual on Interrogations, FM 2-22.3, issued in September 2006, and in DOD Directive 2310.01E, the Department of Defense Detainee Program, dated September 5, 2006?

Yes.

Do you believe it is consistent with effective counterinsurgency operations for U.S. forces to comply fully with the requirements of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions?

Yes.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan comply with the standards in the Army Field Manual, the DOD Directive, and applicable requirements of U.S. and international law regarding detention and interrogation operations?

If confirmed, I will ensure that the Command strictly complies with the Department of Defense Law of War program. The program is enforced through prompt investigation of allegations of abuse and where appropriate, disciplinary actions, to include prosecution under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The Department of Defense Inspector General recently released a report on detainee abuse noting reports of detainee abuse by a Special Mission Unit (SMU) Task Force in Iraq that took place before the behaviors at Abu Ghraib came to light. Additionally, the report noted that personnel in this SMU Task Force introduced battlefield interrogation techniques that included abusive tactics such as sleep deprivation, stress positions, the use of dogs, and the use of Survival Escape Resistance and Evasion techniques – techniques designed specifically to imitate tactics by a country that does not comply with Geneva.

Do you believe that such techniques contribute to and are appropriate in a struggle against terrorism?

No.

What is your understanding of how battlefield interrogation techniques by such units were monitored and authorized?

I have no personal knowledge of the battlefield interrogation techniques noted above and who may or may not have authorized those techniques for use. I do know that some of these techniques (such as sleep deprivation) were outlined in the old Army Field Manual and were, within certain limits, permissible.

Have the responsible SMU personnel been held accountable for their actions? If not, why not?

The personnel (whose conduct is described in the DoD IG report of investigation) were assigned to another combatant command during the time of the conduct that formed the basis of that investigation. I am not thoroughly familiar with the corrective actions taken by that command in response to the investigative findings and recommendations. I am, however, aware of several instances of administrative and punitive actions against SOF personnel who were found to be in violation of the Combatant Commander's policies.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that our Special Operations Forces understand the necessity of complying with the Geneva Conventions when detaining and interrogating individuals under U.S. control?

The Department of Defense Law of War Program and USSOCOM require that all DoD personnel and contractors must conduct operations in a manner consistent with the Law of War and U.S. domestic law and policy. Additionally, the DoD Detainee Program and Army Field manuals for detainee operations and interrogations have similar requirements. USSOCOM enforces these regulations through unit and individual training before and during all missions and on an annual basis. I would continue this practice as one of my top priorities.

What steps would you take to ensure that those foreign forces *trained* by our Special Operations Forces understand the same necessity?

As part of such training, our Special Operations Forces always indicate that further military assistance and training is predicated on such foreign forces adherence to the law of war.

Congressional Oversight (No need for staff to provide these responses)

In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information.

Do you agree, if confirmed for this high position, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress?

Yes.

Do you agree, when asked, to give your personal views, even if those views differ from the Administration in power?

Yes.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command?

Yes.

Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate Committees?

Yes.

Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted Committee, or to consult with the Committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?

Yes.